

Chapter 9:

Social Issues

“If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one.”
Mother Teresa

“One of the symptoms of an approaching nervous breakdown
is the belief that one's work is terribly important.”
Bertrand Russell

“The great thing in the world is not so much where we stand, as in
what direction we are moving.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Social Issues

Did You Know?

- From 1994 to 2001, there were 9,134 assault injuries reported in Greene County.
- Violent offenses account for most of the juvenile court referrals in Greene County.
- Over 8,800 domestic violence incidents were reported in Greene County from 2001 to 2003.
- Greene County law enforcement authorities reported 115 illegal drug lab incidents during 2002, with almost all of these being related to methamphetamine production.
- Alcohol, marijuana, and methamphetamine were the three most cited substances for those seeking drug treatment in Greene County.
- The National Cancer Institute has linked secondhand tobacco smoke to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), as well as behavioral and cognitive problems in children.

Social Issues

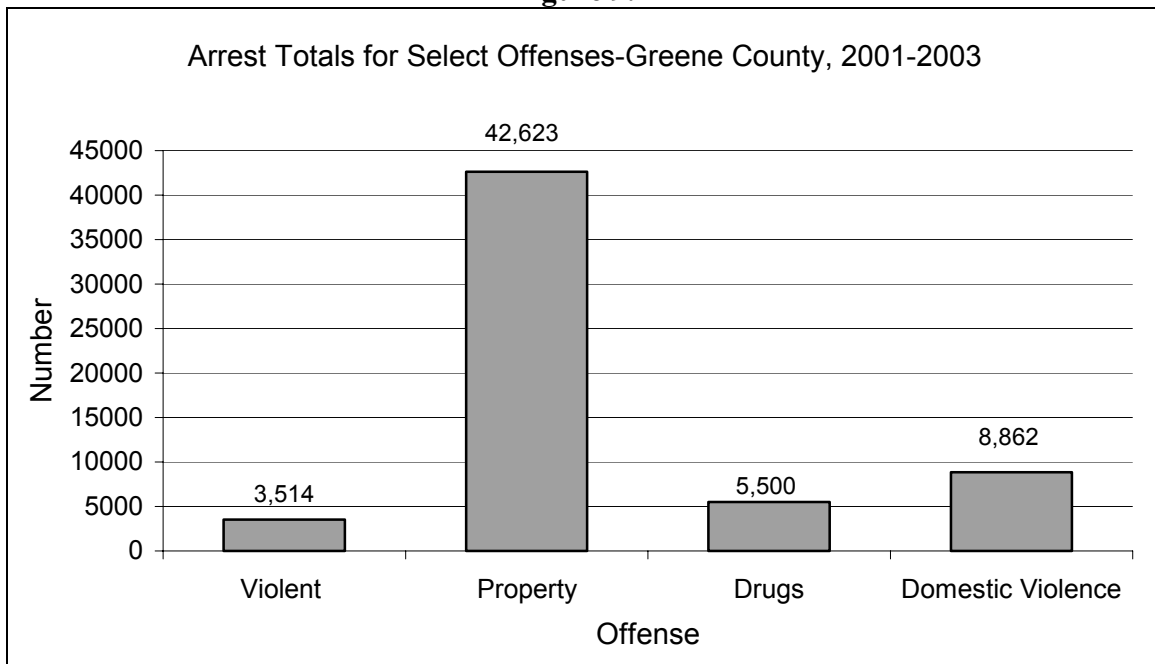
Social issues such as crime and substance abuse affect individuals and families across the county on a daily basis. These problems result in negative health effects in the community both directly and indirectly. Victims and their families experience most of the direct harm from these social problems. Indirect harmful consequences include economic and psychological harm experienced by the community. Social issues ultimately impact levels of fear, stress, forms of abuse, and problems at work or with family life. Unfortunately, many people in Greene County have to cope with these problems constantly.

Crime

The health of the community is negatively impacted by crime as stress, fear, injuries, and addictions prevent some county residents from reaching their fullest potential. Victims, family members, and those who commit these acts will have their lives permanently altered. Additionally, as the community is exposed to reports of these incidents, the population's perception of their community's level of safety will change.

The numbers of different types of arrests are shown in Figure 9.1. Property crime accounted for most of the arrests from 2001 to 2003, with domestic violence accounting for the second highest total.

Figure 9.1



Source: Missouri State Highway Patrol, Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)

Assault

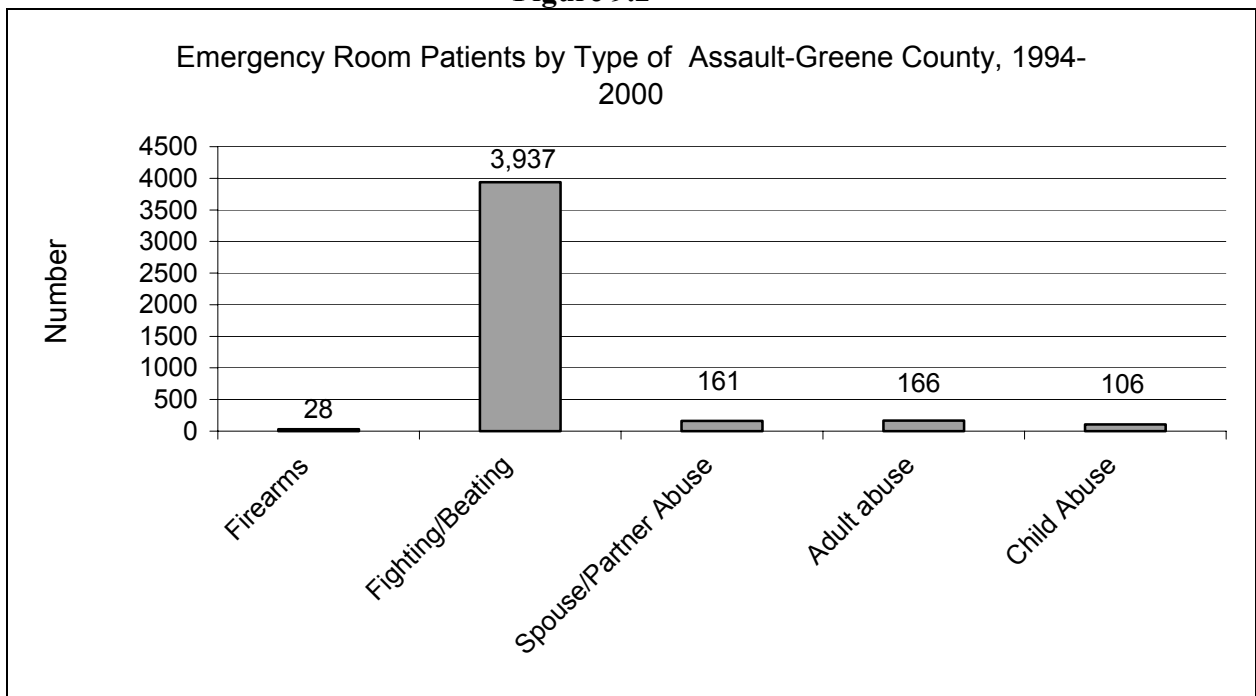
Table 9.1 shows some characteristics of assaults that were reported in Greene County from 2001 to 2003. From 1990 to 2002, 106 deaths occurred in Greene County due to assaults and 9,134 assault injuries were reported from 1994 to 2001. *Fighting and Beatings* were reported to be the causes in 89% of the assault injuries reported by emergency room patients (Figure 9.2). Figures 9.3 and 9.4 show the rates of assault injury in Greene County by selected characteristics.

Table 9.1

Assault Injury Characteristics-Greene County, 2001-2003			
	2001	2002	2003
Firearms	69	63	51
Other Weapons	407	475	471
Hands, Feet, Fists, Etc.	281	422	340
Simple Assaults	3,513	3,904	4,510
Aggravated Assaults	757	960	862
Total Reported Assaults	4,270	4,864	5,372

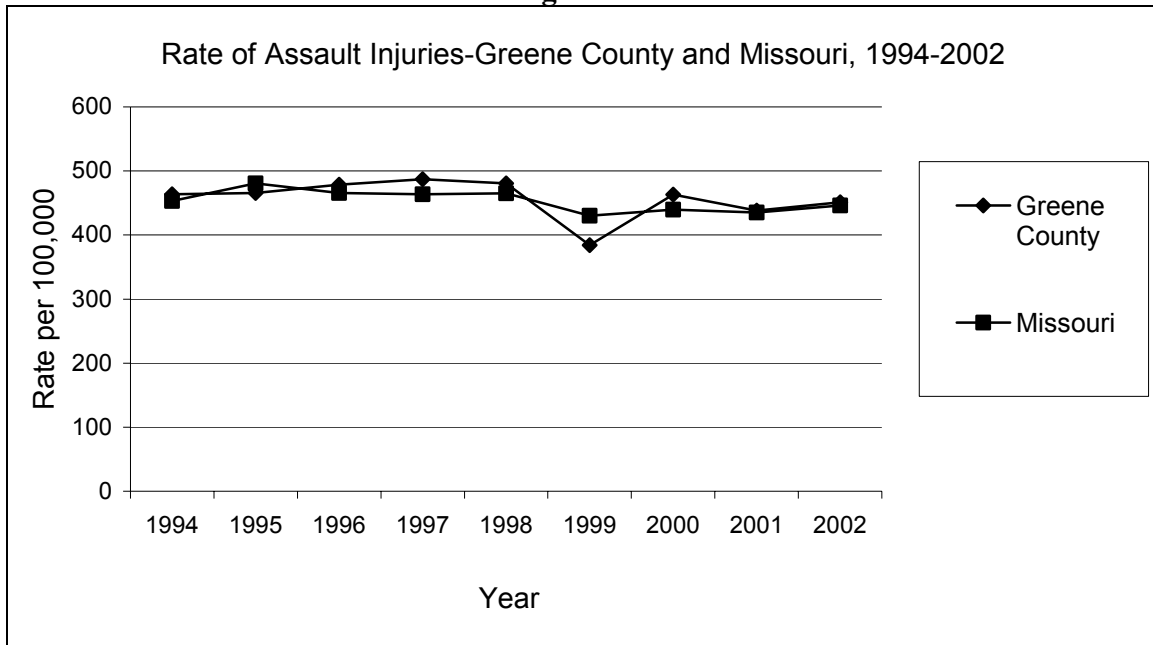
Source: Missouri State Highway Patrol, UCR

Figure 9.2



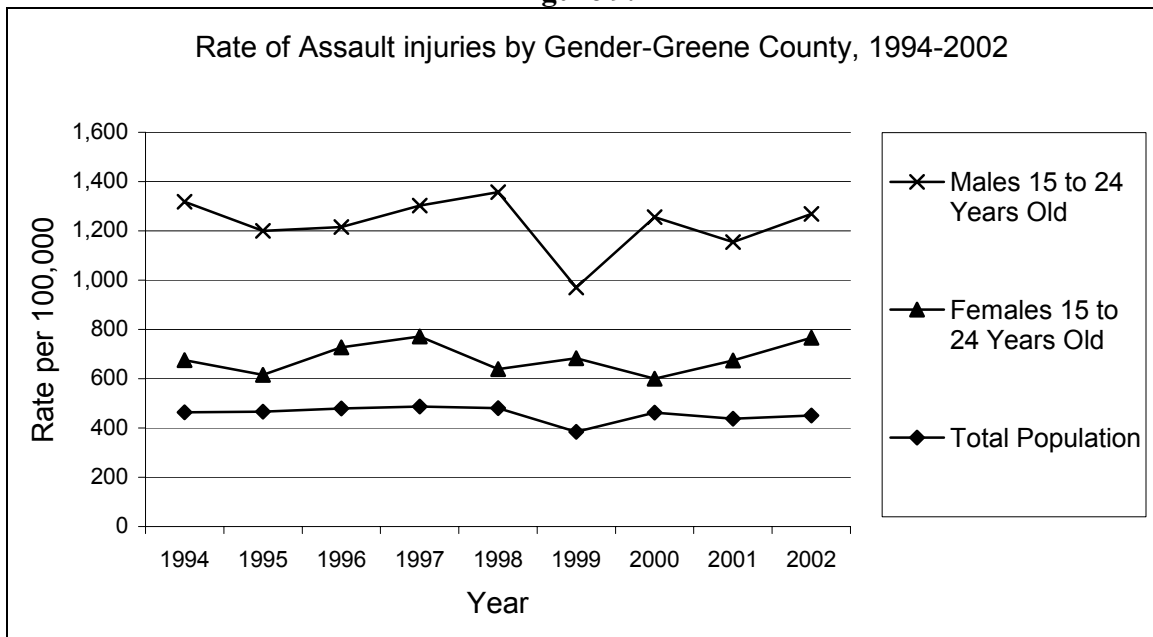
Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services; n=4,398

Figure 9.3



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Figure 9.4



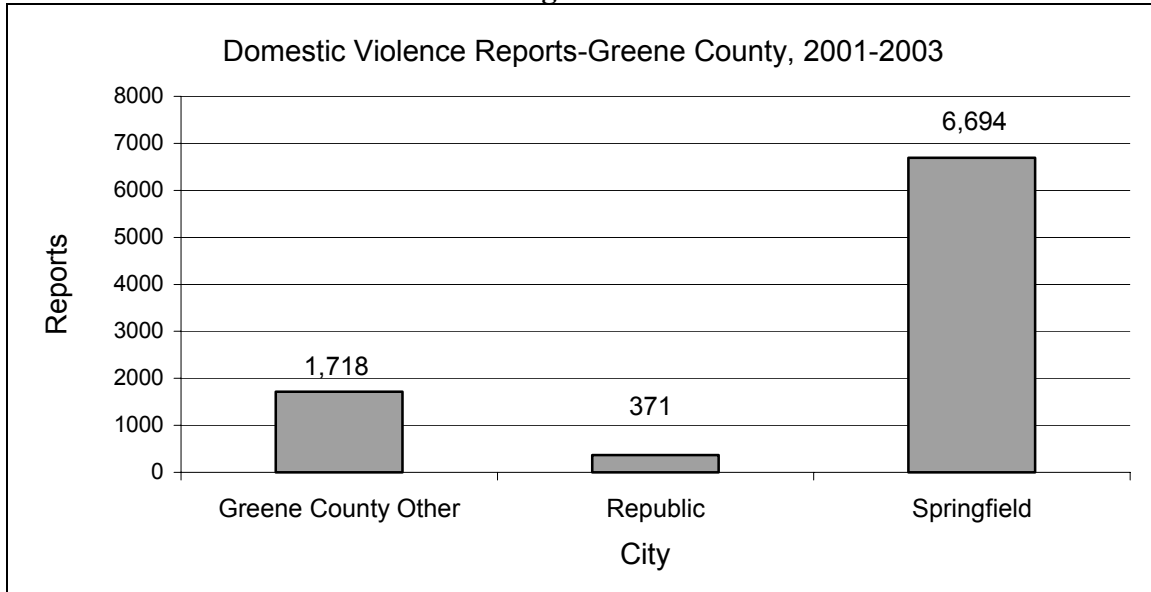
Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Males and females from 15 to 24 years of age have higher rates of assault injuries compared to the general population.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence incidents are reported by city in Figure 9.5. Law enforcement agencies reported 6,694 incidents in Springfield between the years of 2001 and 2003. Numbers and rates for each reporting area are listed in Table 9.2.

Figure 9.5



Source: Missouri State Highway Patrol, UCR

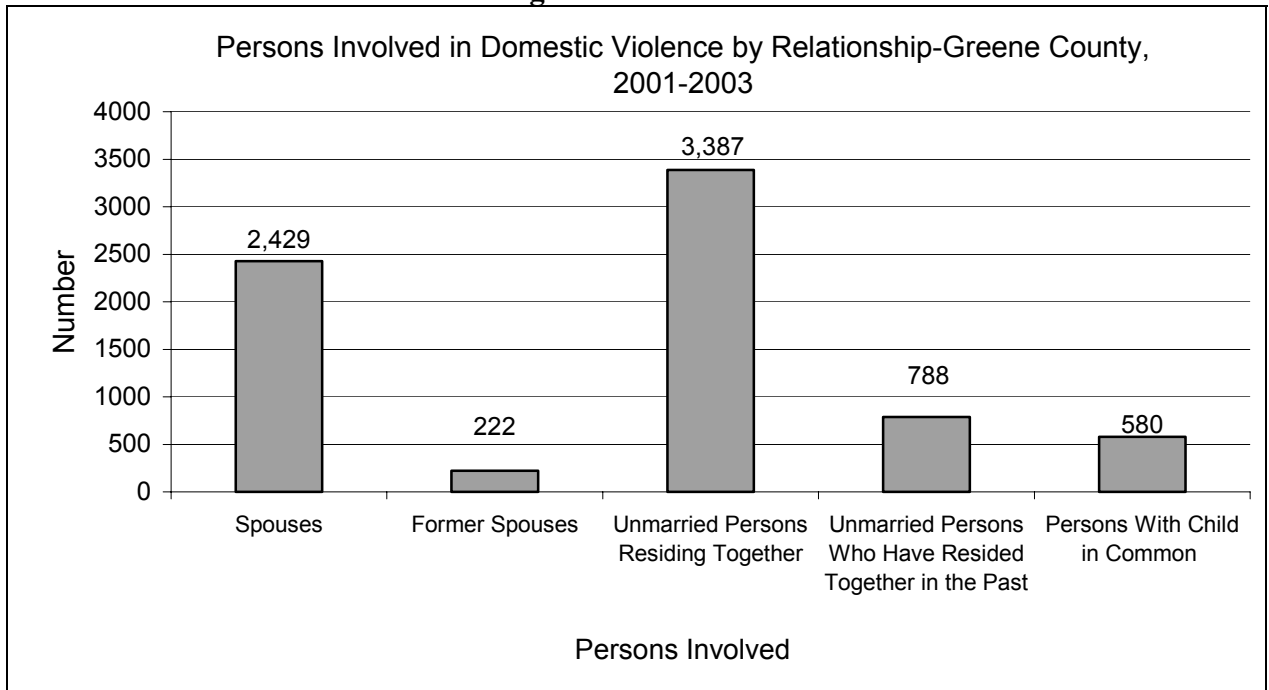
Table 9.2

Domestic Violence Incidents Reported by Law Enforcement Agencies-Greene County, 2001-2003						
					Rate per 1,000 Population	
	2001	2002	2003	Total 2001-2003	2002	2003
Ash Grove	0	5	31	36	*	21.7
Battlefield	0	13	10	23	5.5	4.2
Fair Grove	0	1	4	5	*	*
Greene County Rural	546	606	566	1,718	8.7	8.1
Republic	93	138	140	371	16.4	16.6
Rogersville	28	0	0	28	0	0
Springfield	2,369	2,193	2,132	6,694	14.5	14.1
Strafford	5	0	0	5	*	*
Walnut Grove	0	5	5	10	*	*
Willard	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3,041	2,961	2,888	8,890	12.3	12.0

Source: Missouri State Highway Patrol, UCR

*Rates were not calculated because the numbers of incidents were too small for stability

Figure 9.6



Source: Missouri State Highway Patrol, UCR

A potential problem concerning this data was that complete reporting of the number of domestic violence incidents was questionable. This problem of data uncertainty is present in the community regarding a number of issues because of limited funds, staff, and time. However, the need for this data will continue as community organizations assess problems and plan intervention strategies.

Family Violence Center

The Family Violence Center assists women and children who are victims of domestic violence. The services provided include shelter, legal advocacy, community education, and transportation. In 2003, the Family Violence Center provided:

- Emergency shelter for 298 women and 311 children
- Safe bed-nights (12,948)
- Transitional shelter for 22 women and 38 children in transitional housing apartments
- Safe bed-nights in transitional housing (5,444)
- Meals for women and children receiving shelter (25,094)
- Trained hotline staff & volunteers who answered 2,272 hotline calls
- Case management services for 298 women
- Support and educational groups for 2,571 women & children
- Morning and afternoon care for 2,130 children

Homicide

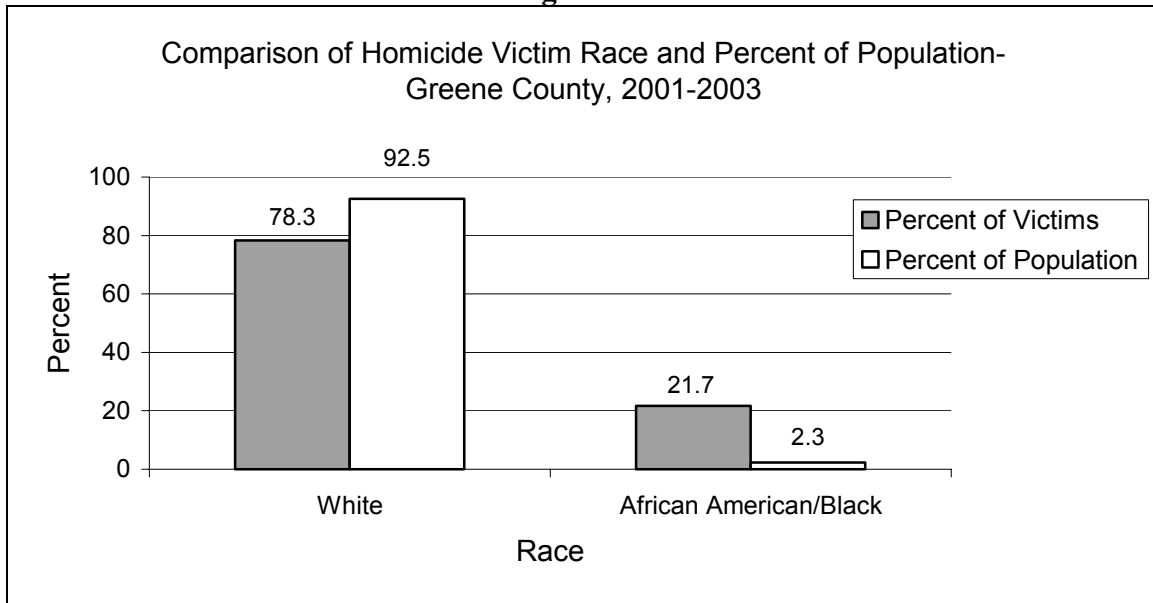
Homicide numbers for the year 2000 through 2003 are listed for Greene County in Table 9.3, with victim characteristics presented in Figure 9.7.

Table 9.3

Number of Homicides-Greene County, 2000-2003			
2000	2001	2002	2003
4	7	8	7

Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Figure 9.7



Source: Missouri State Highway Patrol, UCR

Registered Sex Offenders

Table 9.4 lists the numbers of registered sex offenders by city. This list includes all sex offenders who are required to register with the sheriff's department. Some offenses committed by those registered included: rape, statutory rape, sodomy, child molestation, sexual assault, kidnapping, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, incest, and indecent exposure.

Table 9.4

Registered Sex Offenders by Reported Residence-Greene County, May 2004								
Ash Grove	Battlefield	Brookline	Fair Grove	Republic	Springfield	Strafford	Walnut Grove	Willard
3	3	2	8	17	427	5	4	5

Source: Missouri State Highway Patrol, list of registered sex offenders; Bois D'Arc, and Rogersville had 1 reported sex offender each.

Alcohol and Drugs

The numbers of illegal drug lab incidents for 2001 and 2002 are reported in Table 9.5, and include seizures of labs, chemicals, equipment, and dump sites. There were 2,743 total incidents reported in Missouri during 2002, with 2,733 of those related to methamphetamine. In Greene County during 2002, seven emergency personnel and police officers were injured or exposed to harmful chemicals responding to *fixed* (5) and *portable* (2) methamphetamine drug lab facilities. Five police officers were injured in 2003 during methamphetamine lab investigations.

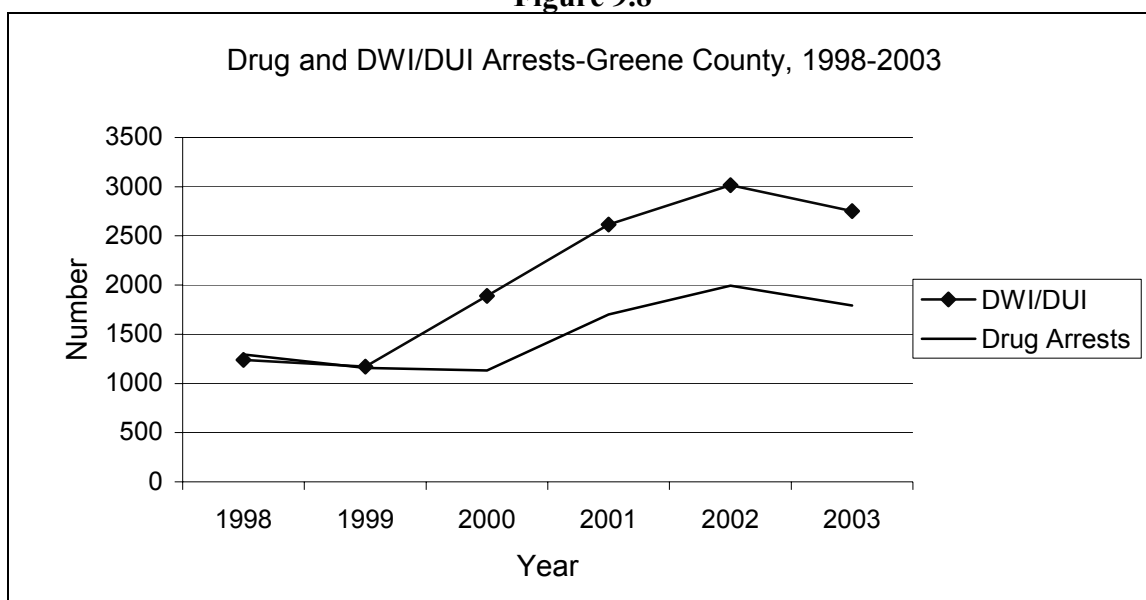
Table 9.5

Illegal Drug Lab Incidents-Greene County, 2000-2002			
	2000	2001	2002
Number	54	96	115

Source: Missouri State Highway Patrol, UCR

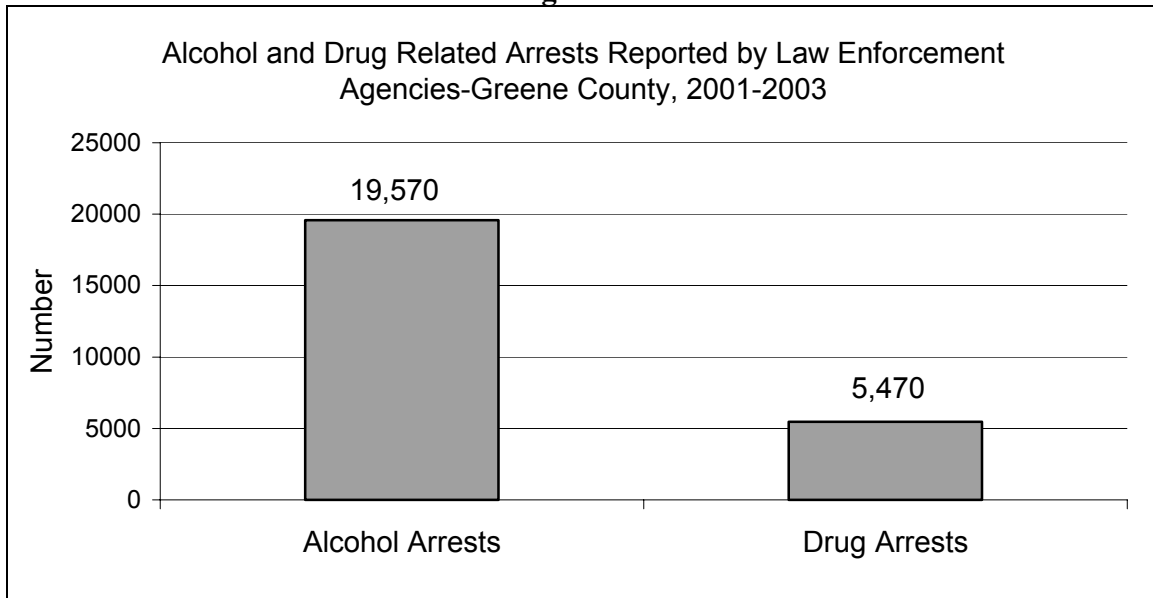
An increasing number of DWI/DUI and drug arrests have occurred in Greene County (Figure 9.8). From 1999 to 2002 the number of DWI/DUI arrests increased from 1,171 to 3,016, while drug arrests increased from 1,159 to 1,995. A decrease was recorded for both categories during 2003.

Figure 9.8



Source: Missouri State Highway Patrol, UCR; and Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Figure 9.9

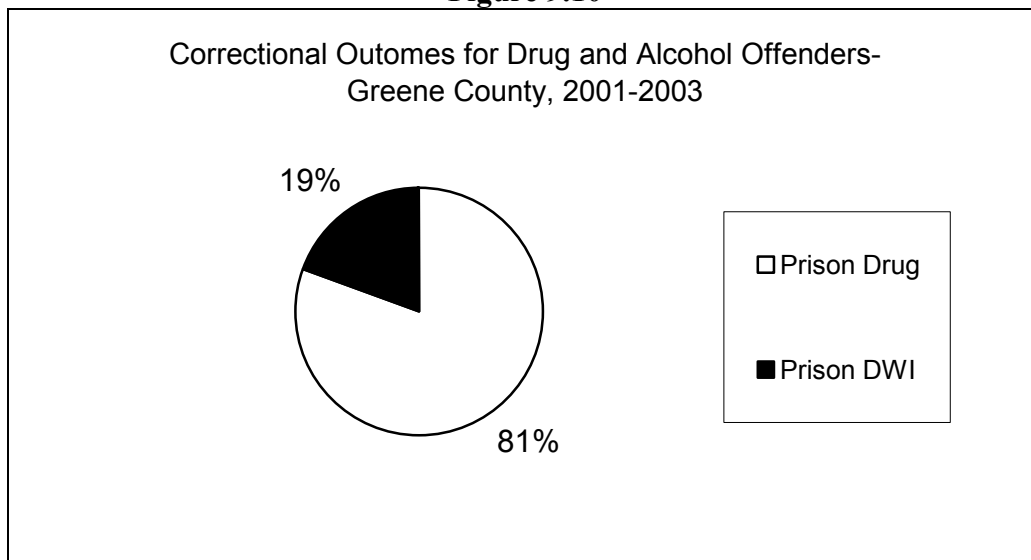


Source: Missouri State Highway Patrol, UCR

Figure 9.9 shows the total number of alcohol and drug arrests reported in Greene County. Alcohol arrests included: DWI, public drunkenness, and liquor law violations. Drug arrests included possession, sale, manufacture, or distribution of controlled substances.

The percent of offenders sentenced to a correctional facility from 2001 to 2003 for alcohol and drug related offenses are illustrated in Figure 9.10. Of all the alcohol and drug related offenders who were incarcerated, 19% (184) were alcohol offenders and 81% (761) were drug offenders.

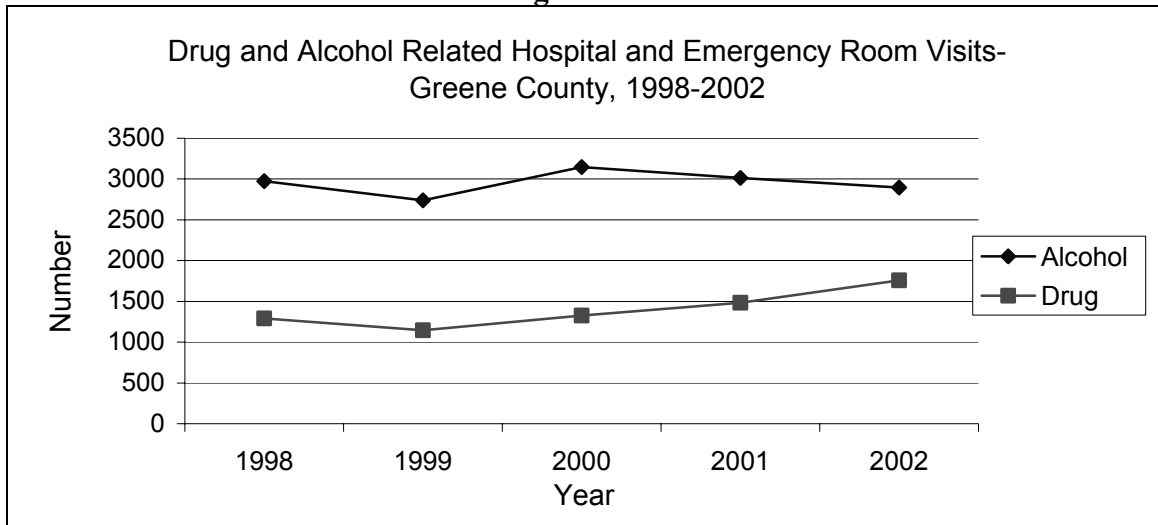
Figure 9.10



Source: Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse; n=678

The number and rate of alcohol and drug related emergency room visits are illustrated in Figure 9.11. Slightly less alcohol related incidents were reported in area emergency rooms, with the number of drug related emergency Room (ER) visits increasing from 1999 to 2002.

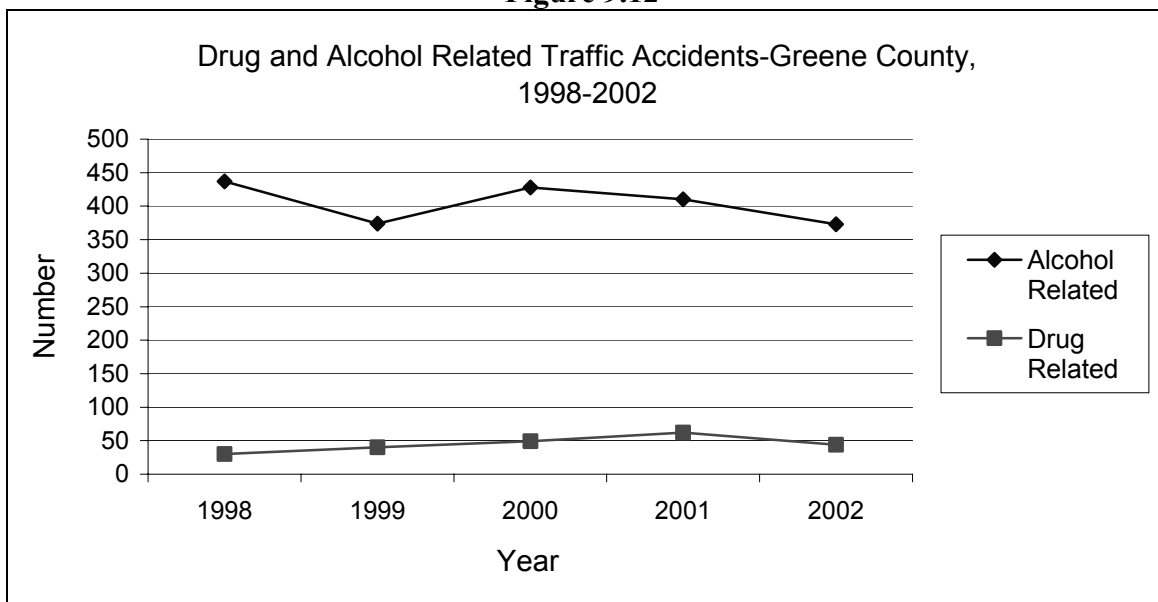
Figure 9.11



Source: Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

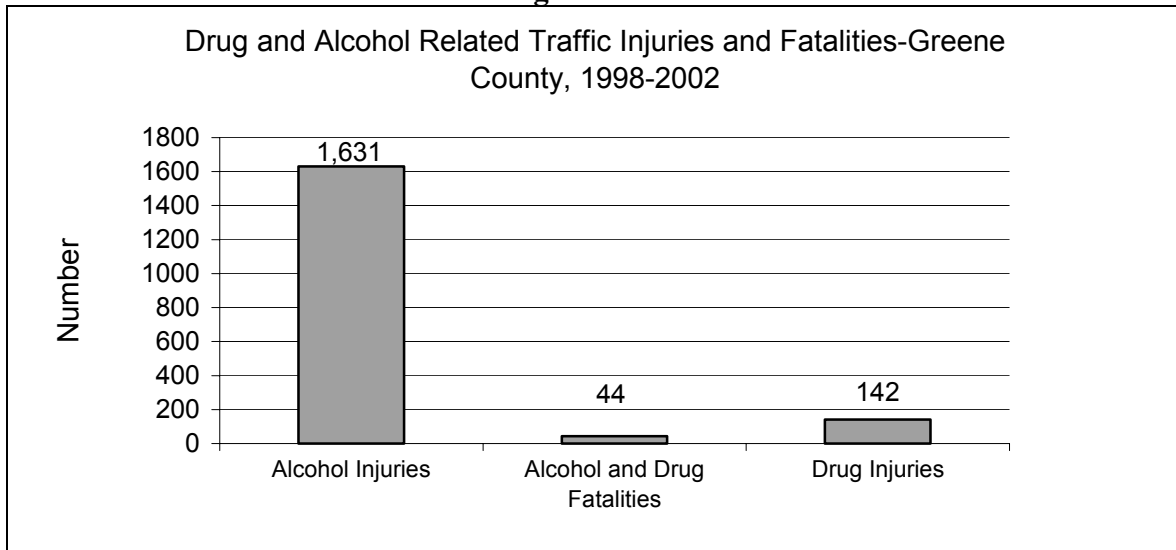
Figure 9.12 indicates the trend in the number of drug and alcohol related traffic accidents in Greene County. In 2002, there were 373 alcohol related and 44 drug related accidents in Greene County. From 1998 to 2002, the majority of traffic accident injuries involved alcohol, Figure 9.13.

Figure 9.12



Source: Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

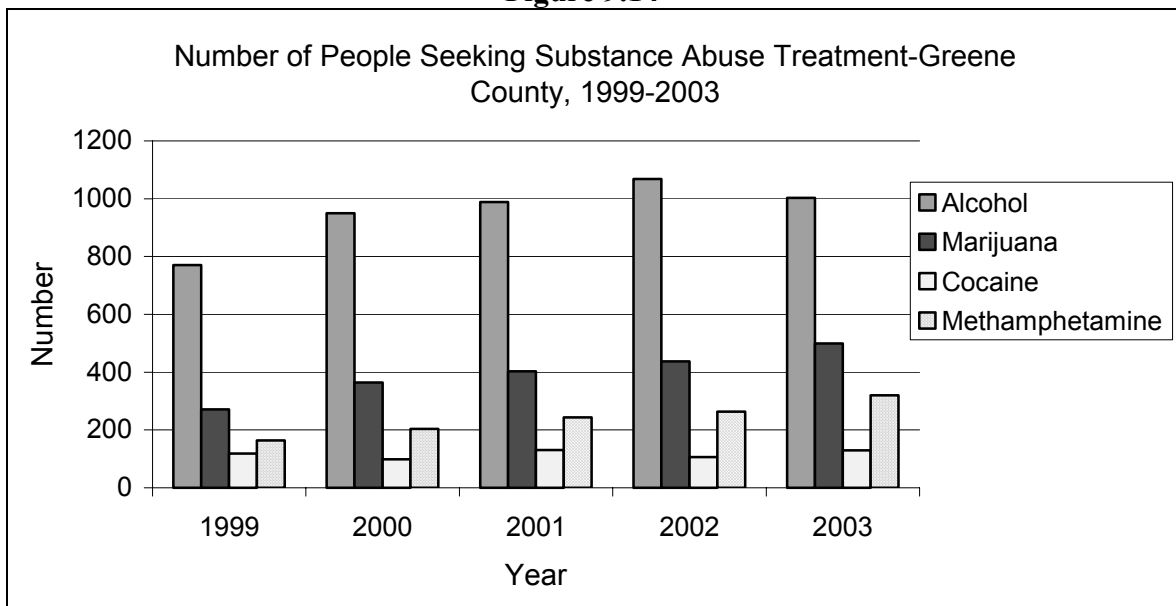
Figure 9.13



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

A comparison of the drugs for which people seek substance abuse treatment is shown in Figure 9.14. Of particular note is the increasing number of people seeking treatment for methamphetamine and marijuana abuse.

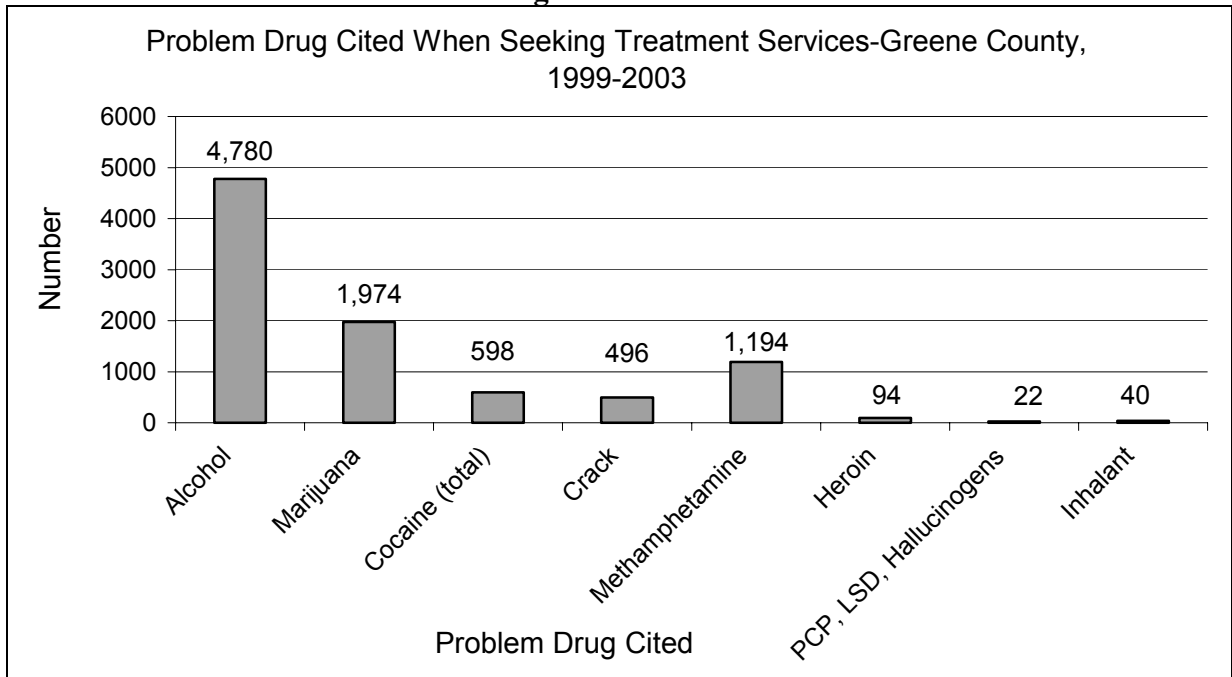
Figure 9.14



Source: Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

The three problem drugs cited most often for those seeking substance abuse treatment in Greene County were alcohol (53%), marijuana (21%), and methamphetamine (13%) (Figure 9.15). Cocaine and crack cocaine represented a combined total of 12%. Heroin, hallucinogens, and inhalants represented approximately 1.6% of the problem drugs cited by those seeking treatment.

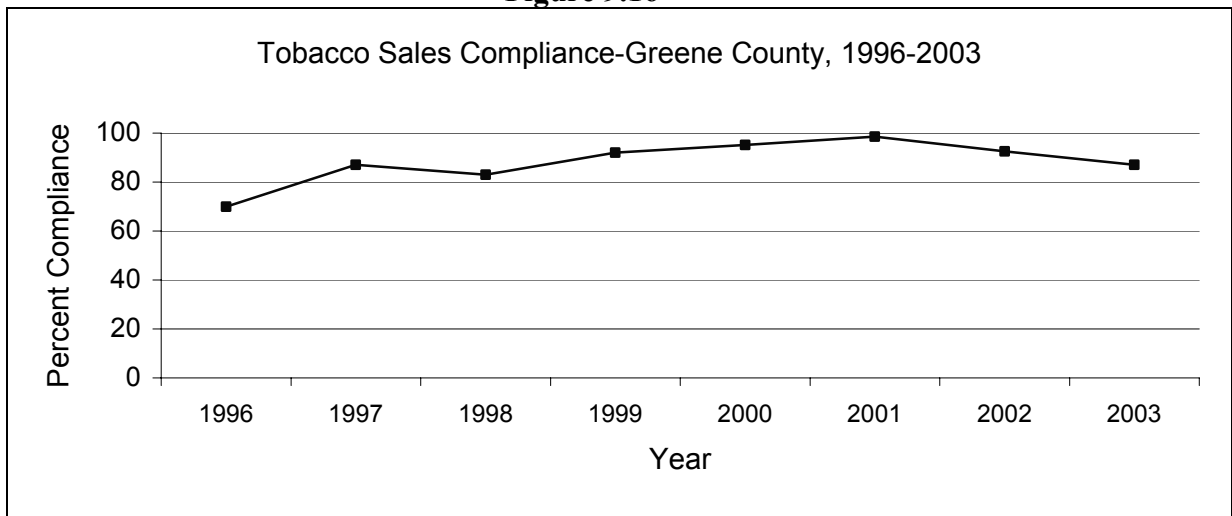
Figure 9.15



Source: Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse; n=9,198

Tobacco sales compliance by tobacco vendors in the county is shown in Figure 9.16. The overall trend indicates that compliance with the law banning tobacco sales to minors has increased since 1996 with almost 99% compliance in 2001 among vendors tested. However, vendors have recently shown some decrease in their level of compliance.

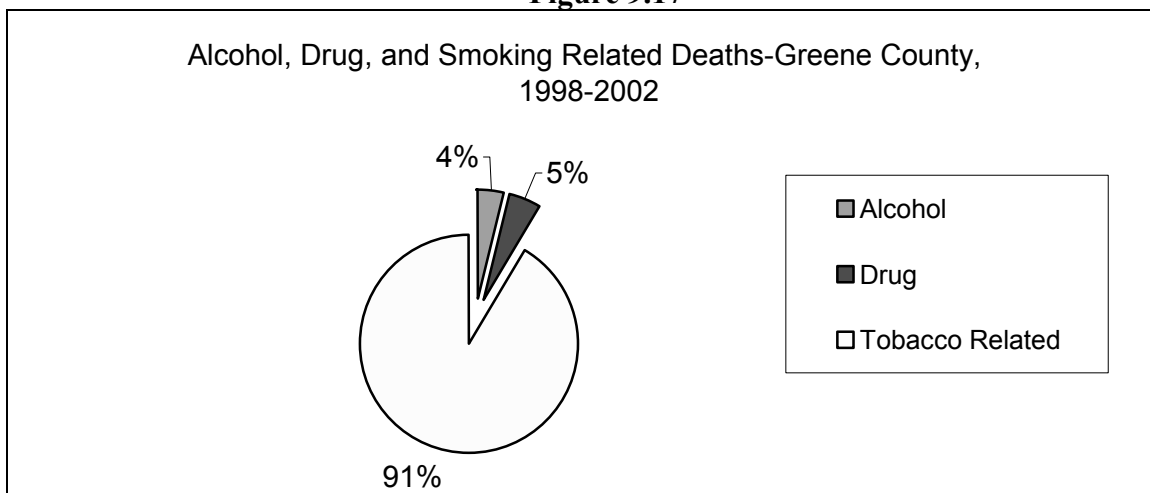
Figure 9.16



Source: Springfield-Greene County Health Department

Figure 9.17 indicates a comparison of the number of deaths due to alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. Deaths in Greene County due to tobacco represented 91% of the total deaths due to these substances from 1999 to 2002.

Figure 9.17



Source: Missouri Department of Mental Health; n= 1,965

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services conducted tobacco use and cessation surveys in Greene County during 2003. Some of the results from these surveys are shown in Table 9.6. These surveys indicated that 23.6% of residents smoked tobacco everyday. But, 69.7% of those who smoked planned on quitting within 6 months (Table 9.6).

Table 9.6

Tobacco Smoking Survey-Greene County, 2003	
	Percent "Yes"
Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your life?	45.3
Do you smoke cigarettes every day or some days?	23.6
Have you tried to quit in the past year?	54.4
Are you seriously considering stopping smoking in next 6 months?	69.7
Are you planning on quitting smoking in the next 30 days?	30.3
Are you aware of assistance available to help you quit smoking?	58.0
Within the last 12 months has your employer offered any cessation programs?	26.0
Has a health care professional advised you to quit smoking? (Current smokers who saw physician)	61.4
Has a dentist advised you to quit smoking? (Among those current smokers who saw dentist)	6.7
Did a dentist ask if you smoked?	28.5
In the past 7 days have you been in a car with someone who was smoking?	26.3
Is smoking allowed in your home?	31.8
Is smoking allowed in your car?	38.7
Has anyone smoked in your work area in past 7 days?	14.0
Does your workplace policy prohibit smoking?	75.2
Do you think that smoking should not be allowed in all areas of restaurants?	55.9
Do you think that smoking should not be allowed in all areas of bars and cocktail lounges?	30.1
Would you support a law that would make all restaurants smoke-free in your community?	69.9
Do you think that second-hand cigarette smoke is very harmful or somewhat harmful?	92.0
Do you think that second-hand cigarette smoke is not very harmful or not at all harmful?	8.0

Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Homelessness

Homelessness is a continuing problem for Greene County. Table 9.7 indicates the average number of individuals who were in various shelters by agency and type of shelter during a census conducted in 2001. These numbers only represented those individuals in the shelter during the time when data was collected. Much higher estimates have been suggested because of the mobility of the homeless population.

Table 9.7

Average Number of Sheltered Persons by Shelter type-Greene County, January 2 and June 25 2001 Surveys					
Agency	Emergency	Transitional	Referral	Permanent	Total
AIDS Project	0	0	135	0	135
Christian Foundation	30	0	0	0	30
Family Violence Center, Inc.	32	13	0	0	45
Missouri Hotel/The Kitchen	186	74	5	27	292
Red Cross	0	0	5	0	5
Salvation Army Family Enrichment	0	15	0	0	15
Salvation Army Harbor House	0	27	0	0	27
Victory House	0	6	0	0	6
Victory Mission (Men's Shelter)	63	7	0	0	7
Greene Average Total	311	142	145	27	625
Missouri	2,361	5,922	1,597	6,546	16,425

Source: Missouri Association for Social Welfare, Homelessness in Missouri, the Rising Tide. 2002

The U.S. Census Bureau has offered different values for the number of homeless individuals in the county. In the 1990 and 2000 national census, over 300 homeless people were identified as staying in emergency and transitional shelters (Table 9.8). This is over 100 people less than what was observed in the 2001 survey completed by the state. These different values are likely due to differences in reporting methodologies and changes in area homeless shelters rather than a decrease in the number of homeless persons.

Table 9.8

Homeless in Emergency and Transitional Shelters			
	2001	2000	1990
Greene County	312	313	337

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

The Kitchen Inc.

Table 9.9 lists data concerning the services and programs administered by The Kitchen Inc. The Kitchen Inc. offers permanent, emergency, and transitional housing through programs at the Missouri Hotel, Franciscan Villa, and Rare Breed. In 2002, the facilities operated by The Kitchen Inc. provided 134,549 days of housing among all its programs and provided over 340,000 meals. An important consideration to remember when examining the data is that the housing services provided to single men changed from

2001 to 2002. This change resulted in a decrease in the number of new residents in the Missouri Hotel. However, overall there was an increase in the number of housing days provided.

Table 9.9

The Kitchen Inc. Statistics 2001 and 2002			
	2001	2002	% of Past Year
Missouri Hotel			
Total Number of New Residents	1,705	1,422	83.4%
Adults	1,265	1,101	87%
Children	440	321	73%
Total Housing Days	82,947	85,598	103%
Franciscan Villa			
Permanent Housing Days	27,669	29,411	106%
Programmatic Housing Days	1,159	664	57%
Total Housing Days	28,828	30,075	104%
Transitional Housing			
Housing days	13,713	16,288	119%
Rare Breed			
Shelter Days	1,924	2,588	135%
Total Housing Days/All Facilities	127,439	134,549	106%
Total Number of Meals Served/All Facilities	341,178		
Total People Served/All Programs	47,812		

Source: The Kitchen Inc, Statistical Reports

The Kitchen Clinic also provides valuable medical and dental care to the less fortunate population of Greene County. In 2002, the medical clinic provided treatment to 12,533 patients and filled 48,110 prescriptions, 27,068 of which were for indigent patients. The dental clinic also provided 371 dental screenings and treated 329 patients. Even with the limited resources of this organization, substantial increases in the amount of services provided were observed.

Table 9.10

Health Care Services Provided by The Kitchen Inc. 2001 and 2002			
	2001	2002	% of Past Year
Medical Clinic			
Total Health Screenings	238	472	198%
Total Patients Treated	10,215	12,533	123%
Prescriptions Filled	38,258	48,110	126%
Indigent Drug Program (Included in Above)	20,506	27,068	132%
Alternative Health & Chiropractic	262	388	148%
Dental Clinic			
Dental Screenings	298	371	124%
Number of Patients Treated	315	329	104%
Number Referred to Dentist	77	118	153%

Source: The Kitchen Inc, Statistical Reports

A more detailed listing of the services provided by The Kitchen Inc. during 2001 is shown in Table 9.11. These programs clearly provide much needed support and guidance for many people in Greene County so that they can regain their place in the community.

The data provided by the Kitchen Inc. indicates the need for services and support for the homeless and working poor families in our community.

Table 9.11

Programs and Services Provided by The Kitchen Inc. 2001 and 2002			
	2001	2002	% Of Past Year
Fresh Start Programs			
Fresh Start Class Participants	1,858	NA	
Parenting Class Participants	197	NA	
Community Assistance	1,429	2,433	170%
Hotel Residents	374	710	190%
Total Households Assisted	1,831	3,263	178%
Total Number of People Served	4,536	3,821	84%
Community Outreach Programs			
Total Households Served	17,126	15,900	93%
Working Poor Households Served	7,364	NA	
Working Poor Persons Served	12,745	NA	
Rent Assistance Households	176	228	130%
Utility Assistance Served	152	186	122%
Rare Breed Youth Outreach			
Average # of Youth Served	46	26	57%
Youth Visits	14,277	7,891	55%

Source: The Kitchen Inc, Statistical Reports

Low-cost housing also contributes to homelessness as low wage earners find it difficult to afford housing. Table 9.12 illustrates that low-wage earners in Greene County will have to work more to afford basic housing.

Table 9.12

Low Income Housing Characteristics-Greene County, 2003					
	Number of Bedrooms at Fair Market Rent (FMR)*				
	Zero	One	Two	Three	Four
Fair Market Rent	\$285	\$361	\$467	\$646	\$671
Work Hours/Week Necessary at Minimum Wage (MO=\$5.15) to Afford	43	54	70	96	100
Hourly Wage Needed to Afford (@ 40 hrs/wk.)	\$5.48	\$6.94	\$8.98	\$12.42	\$12.90

Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition

*FMR: Represents Fair Market Rent or the generally accepted standard of spending that is not more than 30% of income on housing costs (HUD, 2003, proposed).

“Affordable rents represent the generally accepted standard of spending not more than 30% of income in housing costs” (National Low Income Housing Coalition)

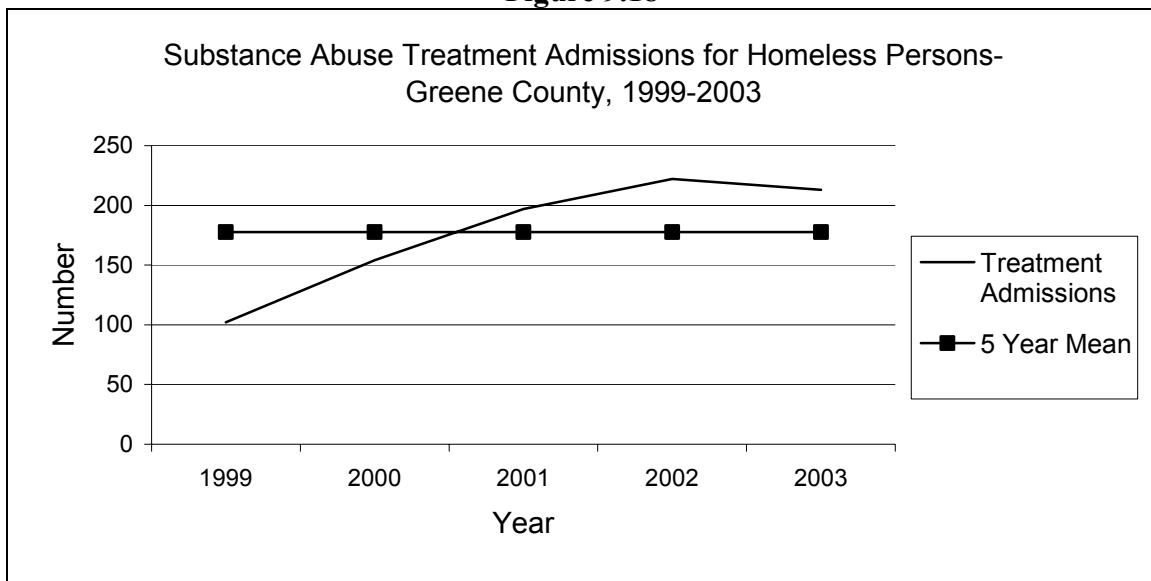
According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, if affordable rent is defined as constituting less than 30% of a renter’s income, then in Greene County:

- An extremely low income household (earning \$14,760, 30% of the area median income of \$49,200) can afford monthly rent of no more than \$369, while the FMR for a two bedroom unit is \$467.
- A minimum wage earner (earning \$5.15 per hour) can afford monthly rent of no more than \$268.
- An SSI recipient (receiving \$545 monthly) can afford monthly rent of no more than \$164, while the FMR for a one-bedroom unit is \$361.
- A worker earning minimum wage (\$5.15 per hour) must work 70 hours per week in order to afford a two-bedroom unit at the area's FMR.
- The housing wage is \$8.98. This is the amount a full time (40 hours per week) worker must earn per hour in order to afford a two-bedroom unit at the area's FMR. This is 174% of the minimum wage (\$5.15 per hour). Between 2001 and 2002 the two-bedroom housing wage increased by about 2%. (National Low Income Housing Coalition)

Missouri Department of Mental Health

The Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse has contracts with local agencies to provide substance abuse treatment services for the homeless population in Greene county. Since, 1999 the numbers of treatment admissions have increased, with 213 treatment admissions in 2003.

Figure 9.18



Source: Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

For More Information, Please Refer to These Works Cited and Consulted

Drug Enforcement Administration.

Website: <http://www.DEA.gov>

Greene County Sheriff, List of Registered Sex Offenders. As of 7/29/03.

Website: <http://www.greenecountymo.org/Sheriff/web/sexoff.txt>

Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Status Report on Missouri's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Problems 8th edition, January 2002.

Missouri State Highway Patrol, Uniform Crime Reporting Statistical Analysis Website.

Website: <http://www.mshp.state.mo.us>

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Missouri Information for Community Assessment.

Website: <http://www.dhss.state.mo.us>

Missouri Department of Social Services.

Website: <http://www.dss.mo.gov/>

National Low Income Housing Coalition.

Website: <http://www.nlihc.org>

Springfield-Greene County Health Department.

Website: <http://www.ci.springfield.mo.us/health>

Tobacco Free Kids.

Website: <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org>

“Let go of your attachment to being right, and suddenly your mind is more open. You're able to benefit from the unique viewpoints of others, without being crippled by your own judgment. “

Ralph Marston